

# The River Project

## Mission:

Encourage responsible management of our watershed lands and revitalization of our rivers for the social, economic and environmental benefit of our communities.



## The River Project

### *What do we do?*

We advocate for a more integrated watershed-based approach to planning, undertake scientific studies, focus on accomplishing multi-objective projects, and participate in policy development at the local, regional, and statewide level.

We promote awareness of our native ecosystems, engage communities in the process of creating parkways and bikeways along our rivers, and facilitate locally-driven public art along our river greenways.




We work closely with local neighborhoods and schools to develop plans, acquire funding, and realize projects that will enhance our rivers in our communities.



# Watershed

## WHAT IS IT?

An area of land that catches rain, snowmelt, and runoff and drains or seeps into a stormdrain, stream, river, lake, marsh, ocean, or groundwater.

## *What kind of projects are we currently involved with?*

- Restoration in Sepulveda Basin
- River of Words Poetry Project
- Valleyheart Greenway
- Sycamore Pocket Park
- Native River Gardeners
- Santa Clara River Alliance






## Sepulveda Basin

### WETLANDS RECOVERY PROJECT

Removal of non-native invasive vegetation along the soft-bottom Los Angeles River; replanting with native riparian species



Baseline/ongoing ecological monitoring including water quality analysis, vegetation and avifaunal surveys, conducted by students



## Sepulveda Basin

### WETLANDS RECOVERY PROJECT

Design and implementation (by students) of interpretive signage to coincide with opening of the new busway through the Sepulveda Basin, which exposes an area of the river to the public "hidden" for decades





## Sepulveda Basin

### WETLANDS RECOVERY PROJECT

**Proposed: Urban Streams  
Restoration Project**

**Pilot bioengineering  
project: removal of  
concrete channel armor,  
revegetation with Salix  
spp., other native plants.  
Cooperation from US  
Army Corps of Engineers,  
LA Conservation Corps**



## Taylor Yard

### INFO HERE

We assumed a leadership role and achieved a landmark victory with the creation of **Los Angeles River State Park at Taylor Yard**, north of Chinatown, on the site of former rail yards which were slated for industrial development. Major support: California State Parks Foundation; additional funding: Metropolitan Water District.





## Taylor Yard

### OUR EFFORTS

Ensuring that development is sustainable, even if this means park plan implementation must proceed in stages

- Educational programs for elementary and middle school students





## Taylor Yard

### SITE-SPECIFIC

Workshops to make interpretive elements for the new park, which incorporate site-specific cultural, historic, and ecological components



## Taylor Yard

### COMMUNITY

Community support was exceptionally strong. A new high school is planned for one parcel.





## COMMUNITY



## CONCEPTUAL PLAN





## Native River Gardeners

The River Project has found that communities are eager to participate in the upkeep of the river greenway, especially when they have played a role in their development



## Native River Gardeners





## Native River Gardeners



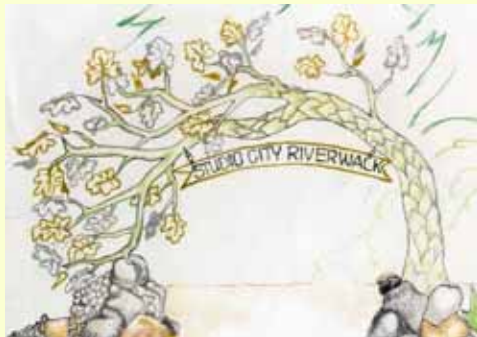
## Native River Gardeners



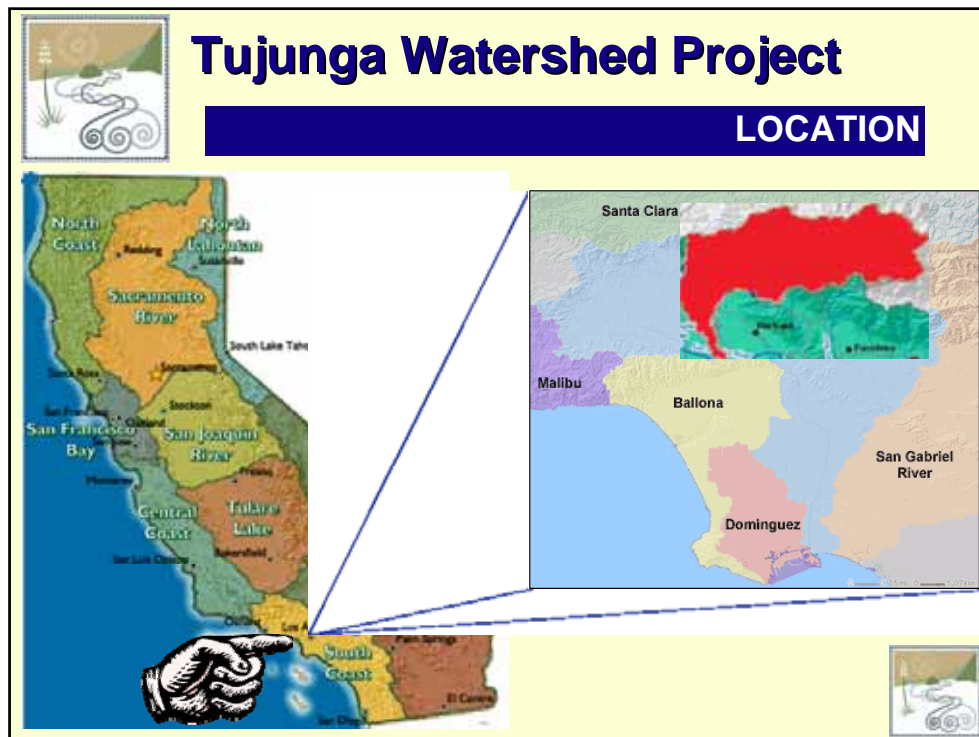
## Valleyheart Greenway



## Sycamore Pocket Park



# Tujunga Watershed Project





## History & Evolution

**TODAY**



Tujunga Watershed  
Study Area:

Total area:  
225 sq mi

Elevation:  
≈ 200m – 2500m

Population (2005):  
525,000

Neighborhood Councils:  
13



## Community Participation

**STAKEHOLDER DRIVEN PROCESS**

**WHY?**

- Blends science and regulatory responsibilities with social and economic considerations (EPA)
- Helps to identify and eliminate redundant efforts (EPA)
- Representative of the communities it is intended to serve
- Projects identified have a greater chance of moving forward: support, funding, policy





## Community Participation

### STAKEHOLDERS

#### WHO?

- Neighborhood Councils
- Watershed Residents
- Elected Officials
- Agencies
- Experts
- NGO's
- CBO's
- Academia



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION





## Watershed Management Plan

### STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFIED GOALS

**Overarching goal:** To revitalize the Tujunga Watershed, balancing water supply, water quality, community openspace needs, environmental protection and restoration, and public safety

- Optimize Local Water Resources to Reduce Dependence on Imported Water
- Improve Surface Water & Groundwater Quality
- Restore Hydrologic Function to the Watershed while Maintaining Public Safety
- Enhance Quality, Quantity and Connectivity of Native Terrestrial and Riparian Habitats
- Improve and Increase a Network of Public Open Space
- Create Green Transit Linkages and Recreational Access
- Promote Watershed Awareness & Increase Stewardship through Public Outreach and Education
- Implement Watershed-based Planning and Projects
- Improve Collaboration among all Agencies, Organizations & Communities in the Watershed



## Data Gathering Process

### THE DATA WE'VE COLLECTED

- Existing Information on the physical, biological, social and economic characteristics of the Tujunga Watershed
- Has a tributary water body focus
  - Geologic features
  - General land use patterns
  - Sensitive environmental areas
  - Water quality
  - Water resources and facilities
  - Habitat elements
  - Species
  - Structure and distribution
  - Economic & social data





## Water Supply & Quality

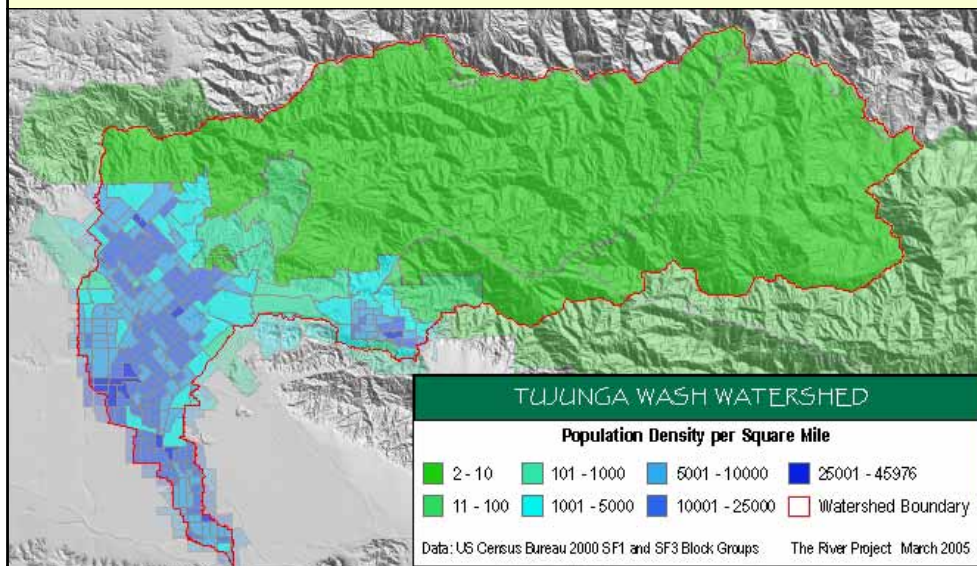
### WHAT WE KNOW

- \* Groundwater basins in watershed supply 15% of LA's drinking water
- \* Groundwater levels are well below capacity
- \* Little interaction between surface water & groundwater
- \* Surface waters are impaired for ammonia, copper, bacteria & trash
- \* Very little monitoring data exists
- \* Ongoing groundwater cleanup activities



## Diversity

### LOWER WATERSHED-POPULATION DENSITY





## Opportunities

### UTILIZING GIS

Parcels

Brownfields

Zoning

*Maps will also serve as an essential tool to be utilized by the Steering Committee and Stakeholders when Identifying multi-function restoration projects and connectivity opportunities in the Watershed*

**Some examples of Layers:**

- Parcels
- Zoning
- Brownfields
- Transmission Corridor
- Waterbodies
- Bikeways & Trails
- Surplus Properties
- Landfills



## Community Site Reconnaissance

### WHY & WHAT

#### WHY

- Identify 20 neighborhood-scale projects
- Community Input & Participation
- Part of the Decision Support Process

#### WHAT

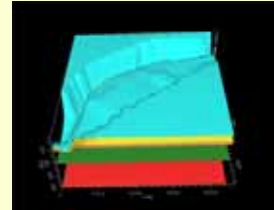
- Empty lots
- Surplus properties
- Easements
- Alleyways
- Abandoned or underutilized properties
- ?



## Models and Other Tools

### WHAT WE ARE DOING

- **Surface water hydrology and hydraulics**
  - Precipitation, runoff, and floods
  - Runoff modeling
  - Stream flow and flood modeling
- **Surface water quality**
  - Surface water quality modeling
- **Groundwater**
  - Groundwater and surface water linkage
  - Surface water storage infiltration modeling

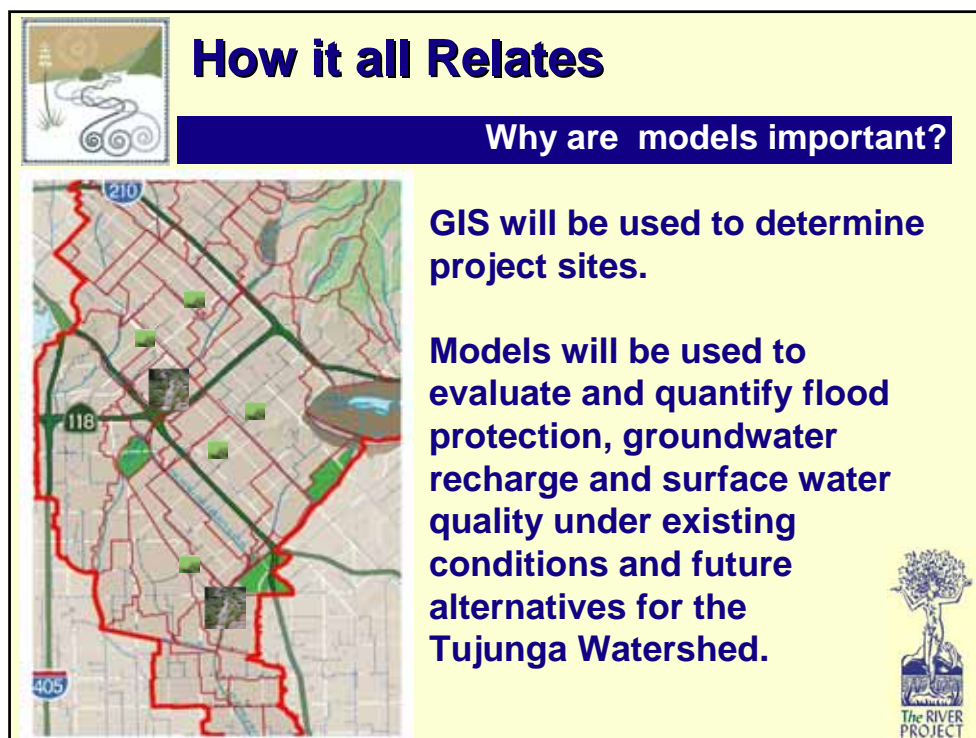
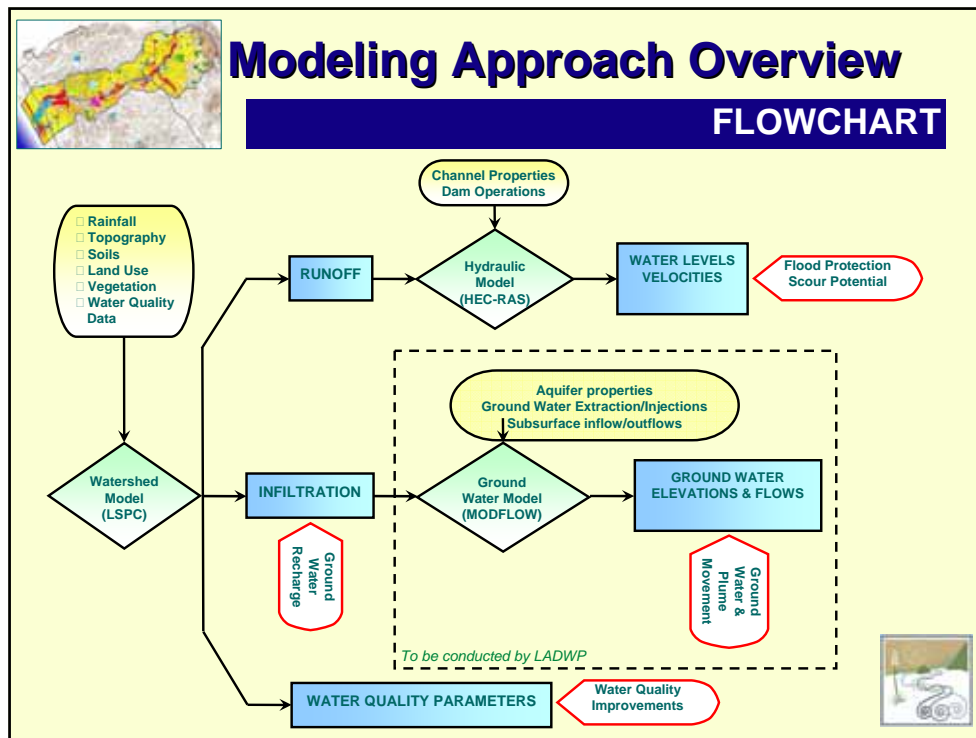


## Models and Other Tools

### INPUTS

- **Topography, precipitation, & stream flows**
- **Stream network, storm drains, soils, & dams**
- **Spreading grounds, channels, & sections**
- **Prior study reports**
- **Existing models**
  - Background, users manuals, codes
  - Prior application reports
- **Surface water quality monitoring data**
- **G/W levels, quality, and pumping**





# The River Project

*.....actions in one location in a watershed will affect conditions in other parts of the watershed*

